



New Internationalist
The people, the ideas, the action in the fight for global justice

Bad education?

New Internationalist
Ready Lesson: Intermediate

This lesson (2 hours?):

- **Speaking**
- **Reading**
- **Zooming in on details of language**
- **Zooming out to discuss world problems**





Discuss:

- 1/ How many children in the world are not in education? Why?
- 2/ Which countries have the highest numbers of children not in education? Why?
- 3/ Do you know what the MDGs and the SDGs are – and can they help?

Scan read
the next 2 slides to find
some answers
-2 minutes
per slide



Education is leaving behind many children

We are educating more people than before. But we are leaving behind the poorest children, the children with disabilities, girls, and children from cultural or linguistic minorities.

The Millennium Development Goals (2000-15) to end world poverty included two important education targets – primary education for all and equal enrolment for girls and boys. After the start of the MDGs we saw great progress towards universal education, after years of no progress. In the first five years, the number of out-of-school children fell by 30 million. The biggest progress was increased enrolment – primary school attendance increased from 83 to 91 per cent by 2013. In some countries – including Sierra Leone, Ethiopia, and Nepal – the number of children finishing primary school increased by over 20 per cent. Latin American countries – especially Nicaragua, Bolivia and Brazil – found they could help the poorest children. But in Nigeria only 22 per cent of the poorest children finished primary school. Overall, sub-Saharan Africa has the highest rate of out-of-school children, partly because of poverty and a big increase in population.

The numbers of children in secondary school also increased. In Senegal the number of children going from primary to secondary school increased from 24 per cent in 1990 to nearly 90 per cent by 2011. The number of pre-school children increased by two thirds. This was after people recognized that these children would not catch up by the age of seven. But 730 million adults still cannot read or write.

The biggest progress was in girls' enrolment with two-thirds of the Global South with equal numbers of boys and girls. South and West Asia made the greatest progress, with equal numbers of boys and girls in primary schools and 93-per-cent in secondary schools. But poverty was still a big problem. In Niger around 70 per cent of the poorest girls never attended school. There were equal numbers of rich boys and girls in Pakistan. But there were 20 per cent fewer poor girls than poor boys. Equality was a problem with sexual violence and discrimination in schools. Academic Elaine Unterhalter says that helping more children to have education is 'not like a polio vaccination but more like treating cancer.' It needs time.

Another problem is better quality. When enrolment numbers increased a lot, quality decreased. David Archer of Action Aid says that more money is needed. There are high enrolment numbers but many children do not finish school and there are poor results. About 20 per cent of school children still cannot read by the age of 10.

Mother-tongue teaching is one big hope. About 40 per cent of children have lessons in languages they don't understand. High-quality bilingual teaching results in higher attendance, more children finishing school, and higher scores in all subjects, including non-indigenous languages. In Mali, children who began learning in their mother tongue scored 32-per-cent higher in French than children in French-only schools.

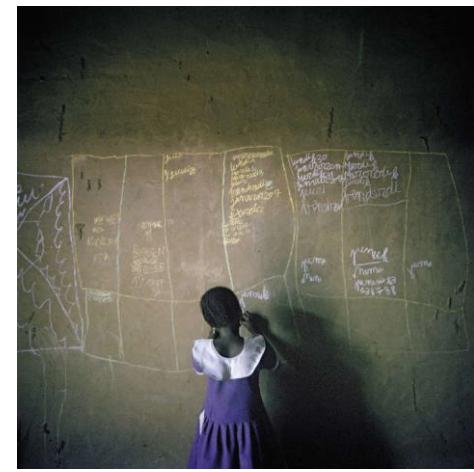
What is next? The Sustainable Development Goals from 2016, which followed the MDGs, want a lot more progress. There are 10 targets for free, quality, non-discriminatory education by 2030. Unterhalter says, 'Some say that's too difficult. How can governments do all these things?' It is likely that education will continue to show the inequality between nations. Niger and Central African Republic do not think they will have all children in primary school until 2100 or later!

More questions to discuss
(you can re-read the text):

- 1/ How is wealth related to education?**
- 2/ Why is access to education so different in different parts of the world?**
- 3/ What's the problem with children in Mali going to French-speaking schools?**
- 4/ Why did someone compare education to polio and cancer?**
- 5/ Do you think the SDGs for education will be successful? Why?/why not?**



Without looking back at the text, fill the gaps, then look back at the text to check when you've finished:



- 1/ In the first five years, the number of out of school children fell(a)..... 30 million.
- 2/ Primary school attendance increased ...(b).... 83 ...(c).... 91 per cent by 2013.
- 3/ The number increased by(d)..... 21 %.
- 4/ South and West Asia made the greatest progress, ...(e).... equal numbers of boys and girls in primary schools.
- 5/ In Pakistan, there were 20 per cent ...(f)..... poor girls ...(g).... poor boys.
- 6/ About 20 per cent ...(h)... school children still cannot read ...(i)... the age ...(j).. 10.



What are the main world problems with education?

And how can we solve these?

In groups, read these 4 articles and discuss:

a) Bad Education: why we need to change it

b) Keeping schools open in Yemen

c) In Uganda parents must choose between government schools or private schools – both have their problems

d) Revolution in the classroom: Escuela Nueva

All texts here:

https://eewiki.newint.org/index.php?title=Issue_505

Writing:

In pairs, either:

- a) summarise each of the 5 articles in a 140-character tweet or**
- b) write a letter to the UN summarising what you think the three main problems are with education in the world and making suggestions how to solve them.**

Homework:

Choose one or two of the articles and read the original articles by clicking on the link at the bottom of the EasierEnglish articles.

Make a note of all the new vocabulary and phrases that you find.

